

TEXAS VITAL STATISTICS NEWS

Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of Health

Winter, 1998

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Five Star Registration Awards and Five Star Hospital Awards

Registration Awards

Thirty-three local registrar offices from around the state are recipients of the 1998 Bureau of Vital Statistics Five Star Vital Registration Award. The 33 (out of 579 in Texas) met five criteria to achieve this award.

Again this year the highest award of Excellence in Vital Registration went to the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District Vital Statistics Office—Alice Suter, Local Registrar. This office averaged 19.7 days for filing records with a rejection rate of only 0.2%. However, several local registrars were very close to claiming the number one position. Most improved local registration office was the Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health Department.

The new 1999 contest period runs from October 1, 1998 to September 30, 1999. The winners must average no more than twenty-five days from the date of the event to filing in the state office and must have a rejection rate less than 1.5% of certificates returned. At least one person in the local registration office must attend the 1998

annual vital statistics conference or one of the 1999 regional vital statistics conferences. By the end of the contest period the local office must issue certified copies only on bank note security paper with consecutive numbers preprinted on the front and must use an application for certified copies that includes all necessary questions to determine if an applicant is qualified. The application must also have a statement regarding the penalty for giving false information on the application.

Offices maintaining an average of twenty-five days or less from the date of event to filing in BVS will be notified by September 1, 1999 and asked to send in samples of their bank note security paper and application. These samples must be received by BVS by September 30, 1999.

Hospital Awards

Nine hospitals out of over 250 in the state of Texas that routinely deliver babies achieved the 1998 Bureau of Vital Statistics Five Star Award. Three hospitals tied for the 1998 Overall Award of

Excellence: McKenna Memorial Hospital in New Braunfels, Medical Arts Hospital in LaMesa and Westwood Medical Center in Midland.

For 1999, BVS will be rating all hospitals on their improvement over 1998. The winners must average no more than seven days from DOB to transmission to the state office, attend the 1998 annual vital statistics conference or one of the 1999 regional vital statistics conferences, attain 85% or more birth certificates correctly listing a father or achieve a 10% increase in the rate of paternity completion over the previous year's rate, improve data quality on three selected items (based on a 1997 National Center for Health Statistics report), and provide worksheet samples to BVS, including mother's signature and EAB & IMMTRAC informed consent items.

Hospitals or Birthing Centers meeting the training and timeliness criteria will be notified by September 1, 1999 and asked to send in samples of their birth certificate worksheets, which must be received by BVS no later than September 30, 1999.

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The 1998 Five Star Award Winners



Registration Awards

Waco McLennan-County Public Health District *
Williamson County Clerk's Office
Erath County Clerk's Office *
Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District
Temple, City of *
Rusk County Clerk's Office
Abilene/Taylor County Public Health District *
Bedford, City of
Amarillo, City of *
Guadalupe County Clerk's Office
Collin County Clerk's Office
Galveston County Health District*
Tom Green County Clerk's Office*
Fort Worth, City of Public Health Department
Grapevine, City of *
Tyler Smith County Public Health District*
Limestone County Clerk's Office
Llano County Clerk's Office*
Comal County Clerk's Office
Madison County Clerk's Office*
Port Arthur, City of *
Laredo, City of Health Department*

Lubbock, City of Health Department*
Kerr County Clerk's Office
Polk County Clerk's Office
Ector County Clerk's Office*
Gregg County Clerk's Office*
Tarrant County Clerk's Office
Edinburg, City of Secretary's Office
Brown County Clerk's Office
Fort Bend County Clerk's Office
Gillespie County Clerk's Office
Maverick County Clerk's Office

*Also achieved 5 Star Award in 1997

Hospital Awards

McKenna Memorial Hospital in New Braunfels
Medical Arts Hospital in LaMesa
Westwood Medical Center in Midland
Southwest Texas Methodist Hospital in San Antonio
United Regional Health Care System in Wichita Falls
St. Michaels Health Care Center in Texarkana
Doctors Regional Medical Center in Corpus Christi
Columbia Medical Center - West in El Paso
William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso

Legal Name Changes

There are many reasons why an individual may wish to make a legal name change on a birth certificate. Religion, a family situation changes, or an improperly completed birth certificate may require a change to the registrant's or parents' first, middle, or last name. A legal name change may not be used, however, to place a different father or mother on a record.

When changing a first or middle name, the standard amendment process may be used if one sufficient document is available to support the change. When changing a last name, however, a court order is required after one year from the date of birth,

To make a change, the first step is to file a petition with a district court in the county in which the registrant or a parent of the registrant resides.

The requirements for the petition are stated in the Texas Family Code Section 45.102 for an adult and Section 45.002 for a child. This information may be found on the Internet: <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/tocs/fa004500toc.html>. The petitioner may wish to retain an attorney to assist with this procedure.

Once the petition is filed and a district court judge orders the legal name change, the individual may wish to file a Legal Name Change Amendment, as explained below, with his or her birth record. Any certification of their birth record will then reflect the new name(s).

Since we cannot amend a birth record to show a married last name, the court order should not include the married last name in the declaration.

Legal Name Changes may be filed with delayed birth records, or filed in addition to supplemental registrations based upon adoption or paternity.

Filing a Legal Name Change Amendment: BVS Requirements

To file the legal name change amendment with the birth record, we require a copy of the court order **which has been certified** by the district clerk. We cannot accept photocopies; however, the certified copy will be returned to the applicant once the amendment has been filed.

If the court order does not include the name at birth, date of birth, county of birth,

or parents' names (including the mother's maiden name) this information must be included in a letter.

An application form is available for filing a legal name change. The filing fee is \$15.00. The fee for each certification of the amended birth record is \$11.00. One check or money order for \$26.00 may be submitted to file the amendment and receive one copy.

Dear State Registrar

Q. What should the hospital do if a mother states that she is married but refuses to list her husband as the father because they have been separated for several years?

A. The law presumes that her husband is the father. She cannot name any other father unless a court has determined that another man is the father. The hospital should leave the father's information blank.

If you have a question, please e-mail us at bvsweb@tdh.state.tx.us, fax it to (512) 458-7233, or mail to Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of Health, 1100 W. 49th St., Austin, TX 78756-3191. Attn: Texas Vital Statistics News.

What Happens When a Birth or Death Record Has Not Been Filed

There are many stories from older generations about missing birth or death records. Some of the reasons for missing records include child bearing at home or records lost, burned, or swept away in a flood before making it to the courthouse.

There are also stories of fires or floods destroying courthouses and all their contents, including birth and death records.

Some discover that a birth record is not on file when requesting the record to enter school, go on a trip, or to receive retirement benefits.

Some find information about distant relatives on tombstones, but after submitting an application for death records, discover that the death record was not filed.

It is very difficult to know the exact reason why a record is not on file. There are still birth records not being filed for children born at home or for some who were born in a hospital.

When we send out the "Not Found Letter" to inform the applicant that the birth or death record was not filed, we provide information about filing a delayed birth or death record. Depending upon the date the event occurred or the availability of sufficient documentation, the process may not be easy.

The First Step

Before delayed registration forms are issued to the applicant, the State Bureau of Vital Statistics must conduct a thorough search. This is required even if a remote certification site or the county clerk's office where the birth occurred has already conducted a search.

BVS must perform the search because not all birth records are in the database that can be accessed by each remote certificate site. BVS also has birth or death records that are not on file with the county offices.

The Mail-In application, VS-141, may be used. A fee of \$11.00 for a birth record or \$9.00 for a death record search is required with the request.

Once the Bureau of Vital Statistics verifies that that a birth or death record is not on file at the state office, delayed registration forms and instructions are issued to the applicant.

Next Issue (Spring 1999): Preparation of the Delayed Birth Certificate

BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
PO Box 10246
AUSTIN TEXAS 78710-0246
PHONE (512) 458-7111

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFIED COPY OF BIRTH OR DEATH CERTIFICATE

BIRTH ☐ **DEATH** ☐

REQUESTED: CERTIFIED COPIES X \$11.00 = _____
WALLET-SIZE X \$11.00 = _____
HIGHLIGHT X \$25.00 = _____
☐ PLAD ☐ STATE OUTLINE
TOTAL ENCLOSED = _____

REQUESTED: CERTIFIED COPY X \$9.00 = _____
OPTIONAL COPY OF SAME RECORD X \$3.00 = _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED = _____

PLEASE PRINT (See Reverse Side for Instructions)

1. Full Name of Person on Record	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name
2. Date of Birth or Death	Month	Day	Year
3. Sex			
4. Place of Birth or Death	City or Town		
5. Full Name of Father	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name
6. Full Maiden Name of Mother	First Name	Middle Name	Maiden Name

7. ADDITIONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION FOR DEATH CERTIFICATE:
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF DECEASED _____
BIRTH DATE _____ BIRTH PLACE, ETC. _____

8. APPLICANT'S NAME _____ TELEPHONE # () _____ (800) 791-0088

10. MAILING ADDRESS _____ STREET ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

11. RELATIONSHIP TO PERSON NAMED IN ITEM 1: _____

12. PURPOSE FOR OBTAINING THIS RECORD: _____

WARNING: THE PENALTY FOR KNOWINGLY MAKING A FALSE STATEMENT IN THIS FORM CAN BE 5-10 YEARS IN PRISON AND A FINE OF UP TO \$5,000, (HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE, CHAPTER 100, SEC. 190.003)

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT _____ DATE _____

IDENTIFICATION TYPE _____ NUMBER _____ (SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS)

There are subject to change without notice (call 512-458-7111 for fee verification). For any search of the files where a record is not found, the searching fee is non-refundable or non-transferable.
(Birth records are available for 50 years and death records for 25 years; however, issuance is restricted. Please attach a photograph of \$5 to application.)
Administrative rules require that on restricted records, all identifying information (items 1-6), relationship (item 11), and purpose (item 12) be provided in order to issue the record.
VS-141 REV. 9/96

Texas Trauma Death Migration

In 1997, there were 8,970 Texas residents who died from trauma. These trauma deaths were evaluated to find the number of urban residents dying from trauma in rural counties and rural residents dying from trauma in urban counties. These numbers may help with partitioning scarce funds to have the greatest impact on reducing trauma deaths in Texas.

For this analysis, Texas trauma death records were limited to Texas residents who died in Texas. Counties were classified as urban or rural based on being part of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) or Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area (PMSA); counties in an MSA or PMSA were considered urban, those counties not in an MSA or PMSA were classified as rural.

Of the 8,970 Texas residents who died from trauma in Texas during 1997, there were 6,903 urban and 2,067 rural residents. There were 293 urban residents who died

in a rural county representing 4.2% of the 6,903 urban resident trauma deaths. In marked contrast, there were 597 rural residents who died in an urban county representing 28.9% of the 2,067 rural resident trauma deaths. This disparity in 1997 was not an isolated occurrence since it appeared in previous years as well.

One possible explanation of the apparent imbalance of urban migration for trauma death is the partial existence of a trauma system. When a trauma system is functioning optimally, almost all trauma deaths should occur in or near a major trauma hospital. An optimal trauma system would result in very few trauma patients expiring at the scene, very few trauma patients expiring at a nondesignated trauma facility, and the majority of fatally injured trauma patients expiring at a trauma hospital.

Since most major trauma hospitals are in urban counties, many fatally injured rural residents would be quickly transported

toward an urban center. The continuing development of a Texas trauma system might partially explain why such a relatively large percentage of fatally injured rural Texas residents die from trauma in urban counties.

Year	Urban Residents	Urban Residents, Rural Occurrence	
1997	6,903	293	4.2%
1996	7,279	353	4.9%
1995	6,973	319	4.6%
1994	7,324	299	4.1%
1993	7,497	260	3.5%

Year	Rural Residents	Rural Residents, Urban Occurrence	
1997	2,067	597	28.9%
1996	2,098	650	31.0%
1995	1,823	491	26.9%
1994	1,948	520	26.7%
1993	1,786	442	24.8%

Vital Statistics Summary, 1997

The Bureau of Vital Statistics annual report, *Texas Vital Statistics, 1997*, will be available for distribution by the end of January. The following information is a summary of vital events for 1997.

Texas residents had more babies in 1997 (333,829) than in any other year since births were first recorded in Texas in 1903. There were 170,863 males (51.2 percent of births) and 162,966 females (48.8 percent of births) born to Texas residents in 1997.

The crude birth rate was one of the lowest ever with 17.3 births per 1,000 population.

Mothers are increasingly receiving prenatal care within the first trimester -- 78.5 percent in 1997 compared to 78.1 percent in 1996. The proportion of women who received adequate prenatal care, as defined by the Kessner index, also rose in 1997 (71.5 percent in 1997 vs. 70.5 percent in 1996). Despite better prenatal care, the number of infants with low birth weight (less than 2500 grams or 5 lbs 9 oz) continued to increase -- 7.3 percent of live births in 1997 compared to 7.2 percent in 1996.

In 1997, 98.9 percent of Texas births were delivered in a hospital. Physicians delivered 94.8 percent of infants born to

Texas residents and less than one out of four deliveries in 1997 was by C-section (23.5 percent, the same as in 1996).

Overall life expectancy for an infant born in Texas in 1997 was 76.3 years. A male infant born in 1997 could expect to live 73.2 years while a female infant could expect to live 79.3 years.

The number of Texas resident deaths in 1997 was 142,569. This was a 2.1 percent increase in total deaths from 1996 when there were 139,678 deaths. However, the 1997 crude death rate remained at 7.4 deaths per 1,000 estimated population.

The order of the top five leading causes of death remained the same as in 1996. Heart disease claimed 43,553 lives and continued to be the leading cause of death, followed by cancer with 32,144 deaths. Cerebrovascular diseases ranked third with 10,137 deaths, and accidents ranked fourth with 7,150 deaths. Chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and allied conditions ranked fifth with 6,696 deaths. These five leading causes of death were responsible for 70 percent of Texas resident deaths in 1997.

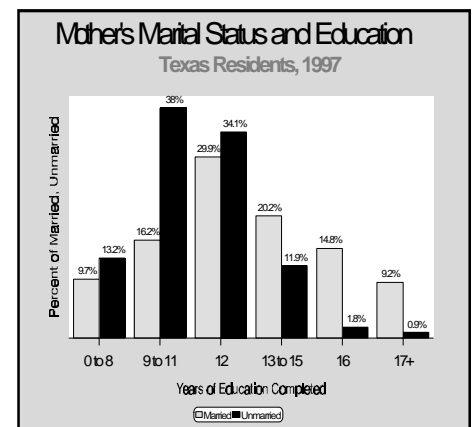
The total number of infant deaths increased to 2,148 in 1997 from 2,079 in 1996. The infant mortality rate (IMR) also increased from 6.3 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 1996 to 6.4 in 1997.

The number of fetal deaths increased from 1,964 in 1996 to 1,969 in 1997, and the fetal death ratio remained 5.9 per 1,000 live births.

There were 81,526 induced terminations of pregnancy (abortions) obtained by Texas residents in 1997. This was a seven percent decrease from 1996. The 1997 abortion rate was 18.2 per 1000 women 15-44 years of age, compared to 19.8 in 1996.

The number of marriages, 182,817, increased from the 1996 total of 178,659. The number of divorces, however, decreased from 95,185 in 1996 to 93,088 in 1997.

For additional information, contact the Statistical Services Division at bvsweb@stats.tdh.state.tx.us or call (512) 458-7509.



We would love to hear from you! Fax us at (512) 458-7233, e-mail us at bvsweb@stats.tdh.state.tx.us or write us at Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas Department of Health, 1100 W. 49th St., Austin, TX 78756.

Please list any topics you would like to see in this newsletter: _____

Please list any questions you have for Dear State Registrar: _____

Any other comments or suggestions: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Around the Bureau of Vital Statistics

Congratulations to Steve Elkins.

The City of Edinburg recently honored Steve Elkins, South and West Texas Field Representative, with a plaque for his presentation to the City Clerks/Secretaries Association of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Steve's presentation was entitled the "Death Certificate Registration Process."

Steve has also been accepted in the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, Masters of Public Health Program.

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